

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

FILE NAME: 1445 Summit Avenue
DATE OF APPLICATION: August 6, 2007
APPLICANT: Sarah Risser and Nathan Zietlow
OWNER(S): same
DATE OF HEARING: August 23, 2007
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Summit West Historic District
CATEGORY: contributing
CLASSIFICATION: building permit
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Christine Barr
DATE: August 17, 2007

A. SITE DESCRIPTION:

The Harry L. Brown House at 1445 Summit Avenue was constructed in 1925. According to the National Register nomination form, this two story, Prairie-style house with Spanish-revival detail has a red tile hipped-roof, stucco walls with tan brick below the first story sill line, and six-over-one windows. The entrance has a hipped-roof projecting above the door. There is a one-story sun-porch on the east side. The house and the garage are considered contributing to the Summit West Historic District.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The applicant is proposing to remove the existing two-story, three-season porch, deck and bump-out on the rear elevation and construct a two-story addition with a footprint of 490 square feet (920 sf total) and a new deck. Windows, stucco, brick, roof tile, gutters, leader heads, downspouts, fascia and other exterior details of the house are proposed to match existing.

A window on the west elevation is proposed to be removed and replaced with a slightly smaller window next to its original location.

C. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

1. *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal changes to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*
2. *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
3. *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*
4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*
6. *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*
8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*
9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features,*

and spatial relationships that characterize a property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Summit Avenue West Design Guidelines

Restoration and Rehabilitation

General Principles

1. *All work should be of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building and the environment. The removal or alteration of distinctive architectural features should be avoided.*
2. *Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event of replacement, new materials should match the original in composition, design, color, texture and appearance. Duplication of original design based on physical or pictorial evidence is preferable to using conjectural of "period" designs or using parts of other buildings.*
3. *Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship characteristic of structures or a period should be treated with sensitivity.*
4. *Buildings should be used for their originally intended purpose or compatible uses which require minimum alteration of the building and its site.*
5. *In general, buildings should be restored to their original appearance. However, alterations to buildings since their construction are sometimes significant because they reflect the history of the building and neighborhood. This significance should be respected, and restoration to an "original" appearance may not be desirable in some cases. All buildings should be recognized as products of their own time and not be altered to resemble buildings from an earlier era.*
6. *Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures should be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.*

New Construction

General Principles

The basic principle for new construction in the Summit Avenue West District is to maintain the scale and quality of design of the district. The Summit Avenue West District is architecturally diverse within an overall pattern of harmony and continuity. These guidelines for new construction focus on general rather than specific design elements in order to encourage architectural innovation and quality design while maintaining the harmony and continuity of the district. New construction should be compatible with the size, scale, massing, height, rhythm, setback, color, material, building elements, site design, and character of surrounding structures and the area.

Massing and Scale

New construction should conform to the massing, volume, height, facade proportions and scale of existing surrounding structures. The scale of the spaces between buildings and the rhythm of buildings to open space should also be carefully considered. New houses should be at least 25 feet high and relate to the height of existing adjacent houses. New college buildings should relate to nearby contributing college buildings; new college buildings with a smaller setback from Summit should have a correspondingly lower height.

Materials and Details

Variety in the use of architectural materials and details adds to the intimacy and visual delight of the district. But there is also an overall thread of continuity provided by the range of materials commonly used along Summit and by the way these materials are used. This thread of continuity is threatened by the introduction of new industrial materials and the aggressive exposure of earlier materials such as concrete block, metal framing, and glass. The materials and details of new construction should relate to the materials and details of existing nearby buildings.

Most buildings on Summit are built of high-quality materials, often with brick or stucco walls and asphalt or tile roofs. Most brick is red and tile roofs are either red or green. Vinyl, metal or hardboard siding is acceptable only for accessory structures which are not visible from Summit. Imitative materials such as artificial stone and artificial brick veneer should not be used. Materials will be reviewed to determine their appropriate use in relation to the overall design of the structure.

The materials and details of new college buildings should relate to the materials and details of nearby contributing college buildings. The Macalester College campus has buildings predominantly of red brick with concrete or sandstone trim. The [University] of St. Thomas presents cream-colored Kasota stone buildings to the Summit Avenue streetscape.

The color of materials should relate to surrounding structures and the area as well as to the style of the structure. Building permits are not required for painting and, although the Heritage Preservation Commission may review and comment on paint color, paint color is not subject to Heritage Preservation Commission approval.

Building Elements

Individual elements of a building should be integrated into its composition for a balanced and complete design. These elements of new construction should compliment existing adjacent structures as well.

Roofs

There is a great variety of roof treatment along Summit, but gable and hipped roofs are most common. The skyline or profile of new construction should relate to the predominant roof shape of existing nearby buildings.

The recommended roof pitch for gable roofs is 9:12 and in general the minimum appropriate pitch is 8:12. Highly visible secondary structure roofs should match the roof pitch of the main structure. A 6:12 pitch may be acceptable in some cases for secondary structures which are not visible from the street.

Roof hardware such as skylights, vents, and metal pipe chimneys should not be placed on the front roof plane.

Windows and Doors

The proportion, size, rhythm and detailing of windows and doors should be compatible with that of existing nearby buildings. Facade openings of the same general size as those in nearby buildings are encouraged. Sliding windows, awning windows, and horizontally oriented muntins are not common in the district and are generally unacceptable. Vertical muntins and muntin grids may be acceptable when compatible with the period and style of the building. Sliding glass doors should not be used where they would be visible from the street.

Although not usually improving the appearance of a building, the use of metal windows or doors need not necessarily ruin it. The important thing is that they should look like part of the building and not like raw metal appliances. Appropriately colored bronze-toned aluminum is acceptable. Mill finish (silver) aluminum should be avoided.

Porches and Decks

Front entrance ways should be articulated with a suitable design element to provide a transitional zone between the public outdoors and the private interior, and should be appropriate in detail to the size and style of the building. If front porches are constructed, they should generally not be enclosed.

Decks should be kept to the rear of the buildings, should be visually refined, and should be integrated into the overall building design. A raised deck protruding from a single wall usually appears disjointed from the total design and is generally unacceptable.

Demolition

Proposals for demolishing structures, while reviewed with special care by the Heritage Preservation Commission, are not necessarily in conflict with district guidelines. When reviewing proposals for demolition of structures within

the district, the Heritage Preservation Commission refers to Section 73.06(1)(2) of the Saint Paul Legislative Code which states the following:

In the case of the proposed demolition of a building, prior to approval of said demolition, the commission shall make written findings on the following: the architectural and historical merit of the building, the effect of the demolition on surrounding buildings, the effect of any proposed new construction on the remainder of the building (in case of partial demolition) and on surrounding buildings, and the economic value or usefulness of the building as it now exists or if altered or modified in comparison with the value or usefulness of any proposed structures designated to replace the present building or buildings.

D. FINDINGS:

1. The property is considered contributing to the character of both local and National Register Summit Avenue West Historic Districts.
2. The new addition and exterior alteration *will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property*. On the west elevation the new addition will be slightly *differentiated from the house* by the placement of the leader head, downspout and decorative tile-work to delineate the original from the new. The materials and details proposed are *compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing* thus in compliance with standard #9.
3. If the addition were to be *removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired*, thus complying with the principle #6.
4. **Massing and Scale:** The addition conforms to *the massing, volume, height, facade proportions and scale of existing surrounding structure* and existing residence.
5. **Materials and Details:** The materials on the new addition include matching stucco, brick base and tile roof and *relates to the existing house in materials and detailing* and complies with the guideline.
6. **Roofs:** The style and material of the roof on the addition will *relate to the predominant roof shape* of the residence and comply with the guideline. Lowering the ridgeline of the roof on the addition would be a way to differentiate the new addition from the older residence and comply with standard #9.
7. **Windows:** Two picture windows and a round-top window with divided-lites are proposed on the rear addition and are not compatible with the windows currently on the house. However, they are to be located on a non-primary elevation and will not have a negative impact on the property. The other windows proposed are compatible with the *proportion, size, rhythm and detailing* of the fenestration on the existing residence and comply with the guidelines. The windows screens would comply with the guidelines if a horizontal bar were added at meeting rail height.
8. **Doors:** The full-view, five-panel, bi-fold door and full-view, French terrace door on the addition are not compatible with the *proportion, size, rhythm and detailing* of the other doors on the residence. They will be located on a non-primary elevation and will not have a negative impact of the property.
9. **Porches and Decks:** The proposed deck is at *the rear of the building* and has been *integrated into the overall building design*. The installation of a framed wood skirting between the posts under the deck and solid treads and risers would comply with the guideline.
10. **Demolition:** The rear two-story, three-season porches appears to be original or an early addition to the residence as well as the refrigerator /ice door bump-out. The brick detail at the base and the framing about the ice door are the only design elements of the house that are evident on these features. The deck at the rear of the house is of a modern design and does not relate to the existing building. These features are on a non-primary elevation. The removal of the deck, porches and bump-out will not have a negative impact on the property or the historic district.
11. The proposal will not adversely affect the program for preservation for the Summit Avenue West Historic District.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the findings staff recommends approval of the building permit application provided the following condition(s) be met:

1. The ridgeline on the roof of the addition shall be lowered by a few inches.
2. The deck shall have framed, wood skirting installed between the support post and the steps shall have solid treads and risers.
3. Window screens shall have a horizontal bar installed that shall line-up with the meeting rail on the windows.
4. The stamped approved plans must be onsite during the construction of the project.
5. Any changes or revisions to the approved plans must be reviewed and approved by the HPC or HPC staff.